

conventional weapons, for civilian casualties are an unavoidable tragedy of war.

Well, who would be our new allies in this war?

They'd be the Islamic forces that are responsible for their own litany of atrocities, including the massacre of Syrian Christians, the beheading of political opponents, summary executions of war prisoners and acts of barbarity too depraved to be discussed in this forum. We would be aiding and abetting those forces.

We're told that al Qaeda's not more than a fourth of our new coalition and that the rest are moderates. Well, we were told the same thing about Libya. We were told the same thing about the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

The problem with moderates in the Middle East is that there aren't very many of them, and they're quickly overwhelmed in any coalition they attempt.

Nor can such an attack be limited in duration or scope. The fact is, once you have attacked another country, you are at war with that country and its allies, whatever you wish to call it, and whatever you later decide to do.

And wars have a very nasty way of taking turns that no one can predict or control. World War I began with a series of obscure incidents that quickly escalated into world war. And the Middle East today is a veritable powder keg compared to the antebellum Europe of a century ago.

Finally, we're told American credibility is on the line. Well, chemical weapons are barbaric, but this isn't the first time they've been used in modern times. They were used previously in Syria, in the Yemeni civil war, by Iraq against Iran, by the Vietnamese against the Cambodians, by Libya against Chad.

The only unique thing about this incident is that it is the first time an American President has declared their use to be a "red line." Our credibility was harmed by a foolish and reckless statement by the President. Let us not further damage it with a foolish and reckless act by Congress.

Wars are not something to be taken lightly. From the podium right behind me, General MacArthur warned that, "In war there is no substitute for victory."

If you're going to start a war, you'd better be prepared to put the entire resources of the country behind it, to endure every setback along the way, to utterly annihilate every vestige of the enemy, and to install, by force, a government of our design and choosing, and to maintain that government until all opposition is ceased. If you are not willing to do that, then you have no business firing the first shot.

More than a decade of irresolute and aimless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan should have taught us this lesson: that victory, and not stalemate, must be the objective of any war. Yet, this would be a war whose avowed objective

is stalemate. That is self-defeating. It is immoral.

The President has already made his case very clearly, and he is very clearly wrong.

THE SYRIAN CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank President Obama for his considered judgment in the matter of Syria, and for not headstrong rushing the United States to military action.

I thank him for his consultations with Members of Congress in both Chambers, and for allowing the American people time to express their views. We must all weigh the consequences and repercussions of unilateral U.S. action.

As the world's greatest military power, we must employ our power wisely, and only with good measure. I have every confidence that our U.S. military can perform any task to which they are ordered successfully, and we owe them our deepest respect and gratitude.

I also want to thank and acknowledge the government of Russia for early reports we are learning about regarding discussions under way to rid Syria of weapons caches of danger both to Syria as well as our global community.

Both Russia and the United States, as the world's premier nuclear powers, hold awesome responsibilities to move our world to a more peaceful and stable posture. Surely, we must focus that effort on the very unstable set of states across the Middle East.

Russia and our country both have suffered from terrorist attacks and well understand the consequences of unresolved conflict and terrorists preying on unstable states.

My hope is that the Russian initiative gains momentum. And let all nations of goodwill on our globe find a way forward to address the tragic consequences of the Syrian civil war, starting with greater humanitarian assistance to refugees that have flowed into adjoining nations like Jordan and Lebanon and Turkey, straining some of those nations' abilities to even hold their own internal affairs together.

Surely, our world can better address the human suffering that is evident to anyone who's paying attention. Surely, surely, all reasonable world leaders can find a better way forward for Syria and for us all.

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE PRESIDENT BEATS THE DRUMS FOR WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the drums of war are being beaten by the President who, ironically, won the Nobel Peace Prize. The "Peace Presi-

dent" wants to fire missiles into Syria because tyrant Assad is violating the rules of war by allegedly using chemical weapons. The President's goal is not to remove Assad, not to destroy the chemical weapons, but to send Assad a message.

To be clear, there is no imminent national security threat or interest for the United States by us starting this war. And make no mistake, shooting rockets into another country is an act of war.

War has consequences. What if the outlaw Assad chooses then to use chemical weapons again or chooses to shoot back? He could retaliate against the United States, one of our embassies, the Navy that fired the rockets, or other U.S. military installations, or even specific troops, or retaliate against his neighbor, Turkey, or Israel, using our aggression as an excuse. In any of these situations, this limited war escalates with more U.S. response, intervention, and involvement.

Now, who are the players in this war that is taking place already? On one side you have Syria, tyrant Assad, with the aid of Russia, with the aid of Iran that news reports say has 10,000 Iranian troops in Syria, and Hezbollah. Hezbollah, as you remember, Madam Speaker, is a terrorist group.

Then, on the other side, you have the Free Syrian Army. You have patriots. You have mercenaries, paid soldiers from other countries. You have criminals that have come in to just pillage the land and use this as an opportunity. You also have al Nusra, an al Qaeda affiliate. You also have al Qaeda from Iraq. Now, last time I recall, the United States is already at war with al Qaeda. They are the enemy of the United States.

□ 1015

And it looks like now you've got the terrorist group Hezbollah on one side and the terrorist group al Qaeda on the other side. And we want to get involved in this civil religious war to send a message not to use chemical weapons?

Of course, you not only just have these players, but you've got Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar lined up on the side of the Free Syrian Army. Turkey is a next-door neighbor to Syria. A year ago, a Turkish F-4 built by the United States was flying along the Syrian border, and it was shot down. We don't know who shot it down.

Meanwhile, the United States already has, along with its NATO parties, patriot batteries on the Syrian border facing Syria that are in Turkey. The Dutch, the Germans, and the Americans have manned those batteries. Why? To make sure that our NATO ally is protected from incoming rockets. If we escalate this regional conflict in one country, it may escalate to other regions, like Turkey. Then we've got real issues because Turkey is a NATO ally. We are obligated to help them if they get into a war with Syria.